

# THE BOSTON INFORMER

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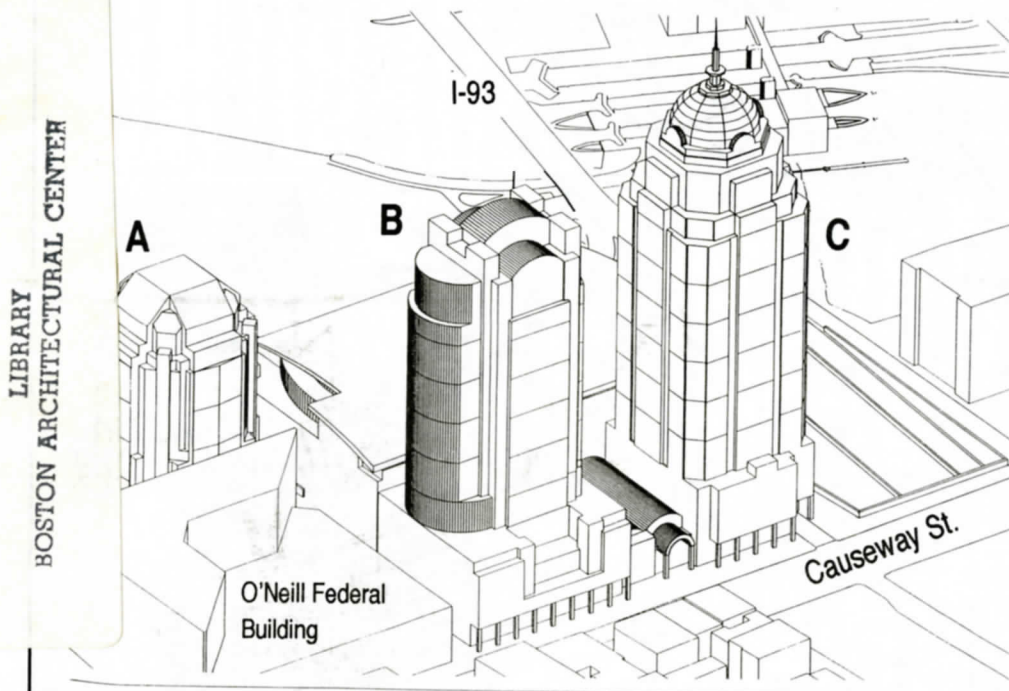
Annual awards on the  
landscape and cityscape

No. 40

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## 1990 Plan for North Station



Plans are proceeding quietly to redevelop the Boston Garden site at North Station. Under a confidential agreement with Delaware North, owner of the site and Fleet Center, little-known developer Richard Costigan has the rights to build within guidelines of a development proposal approved in 1990 by the New Boston Garden Corp.

No details of the Costigan plan have been published, but the approved 1990 project included two Causeway Street buildings split by a public concourse and entrance to North Station. Building B was approved at 425 feet high with 833,000 s.f. of office and retail space. Building C was to be 475 feet high with 967,000 s.f. of office and retail space. A six-level, 1,100-space underground parking garage was also approved, with the entrance on the east side of Building C. Building A, on the north side of the Thomas P. O'Neill Federal Building with access from Nashua Street, was approved at 277 feet high with about 450,000 s.f. of office space. However, the Beacon Hill Times recently reported that Building A is now being planned as a 400-foot condominium tower, and a hotel may replace office space in either of the other buildings.

Neither the financial backer nor the architect for the new project has been disclosed.

Source: Thomson, French & Assoc., Inc., 1990

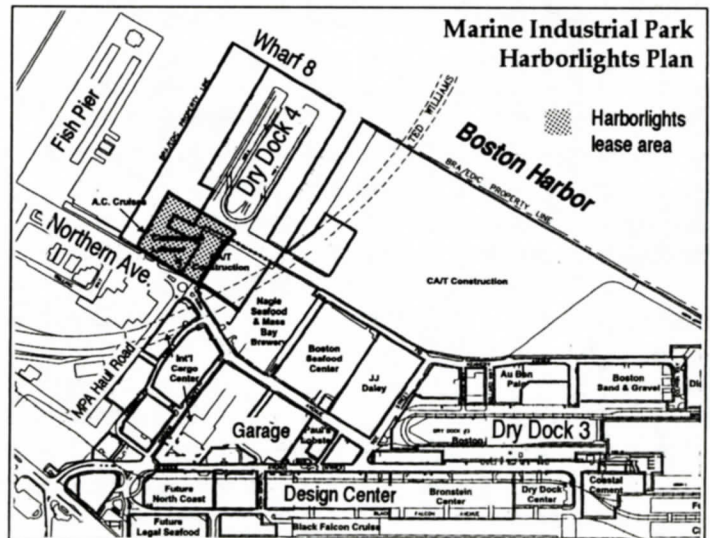
**Harborlights Concert Pavilion**—When the lease for the Harborlights outdoor concert tent on the Fan Pier was not renewed by the Pritzker family, owners of the property, Harborlights owners SFX Entertainment Inc. of New York proposed moving farther down Northern Avenue on the South Boston waterfront. The site, Wharf 8 on Northern Avenue in South Boston near the entrance to the Marine Industrial Park, involves a "temporary" five-year lease. Wharf 8 includes the disused Dry Dock #4.

In late January, newly appointed Secretary of Environmental Affairs Robert Durand's first major ruling gave a five-year, conditional approval to the plans for the move. An environmental impact report will not be required, but the proponent must comply with Chapter 91 waterways requirements and negotiate with shipping and truck interests and port activists. The new Harborlights site was promoted by the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) and many lobbyists and consultants, with BRA officials giving presentations on behalf of the proponents at community meetings even though Wharf 8 is currently zoned for maritime industrial uses only. The BRA's interest is in part due to Harborlights agreeing to contribute \$1.5 million over five years to help refurbish Wharf 8 and Dry Dock #4 and would build a harborwalk around the site.

After tough negotiations between the various interests, brokered by the Massachusetts Office of Dispute Resolution, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) approved the proposal. Among the conditions for approval are that Harborlights must look for a new site after three years and move out after five years. It must minimize traffic by possibly providing shuttles buses, start con-

certs after 6:00 p.m. on weekdays, and pay \$200,000 for improvements to Wharf 8 and Drydock 4. Harborlights will build a tent structure for up to 5,000 people, with ticket offices, concessions, restrooms and backstage compound, in use from May to October only. The Commercial Lobster Co. would be relocated off-site. No public parking would be provided on-site, but garages at EDIC (1,070 spaces) and the Seaport Hotel (1,250 spaces) are relatively close.

SFX Entertainment had considered a permanent site in Charlestown and may reconsider that venue.



Source: Harborlights Pavilion Environmental Notification Form, Fort Point Associates



## People Movers

**Peter M. Zuk**, from project director of the Central Artery/Tunnel (CA/T) project, to vice president of Level 3 Communications Inc. fiber optics.

**Patrick J. Moynihan**, from secretary of EOTC to project director of the CA/T.

**Matthew Amorello**, former state senator from Grafton and loser of race for Congress, is the new Mass. Highway (MHD) commissioner.

**Kevin J. Sullivan**, from MHD commissioner to secretary of Executive Office of Transportation and Construction (EOTC).

**Phil Puccia**, from MBTA deputy general manager, to Adelphi Capital.

**Judith Nitsch** of Judith Nitsch Engineering was appointed president of the American Consulting Engineers Council of Mass. (ACEC/MA).

**David Struhs**, from DEP commissioner to Florida.

**Chris Mauck**, from Bryant Assoc. to Mt. Vernon Strategies.

**Richard Heath**, former head of the GreenSpace Alliance, is the new executive director of the Mary Ellen McCormack Task Force.

**Paul Smith**, from Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, to Rizzo Associates.

**Sen. Robert Durand** (D-Marlborough) is now secretary of environmental affairs.

**Joe Breitenicher** of The Philanthropic Institute is working as a consultant for MDA Associates (Millennium Partners' local associate).

**Norman Lipsitz**, from Bryant Associates to Howe Survey.

**Carl King** of Goldstein & Manello, PC, has been elected to the board of the Bicycle Coalition of Massachusetts.

**Jennifer Goodman**, from executive director of Boston Preservation Alliance to executive director of Inherit New Hampshire.

**Antonia Pollack** is the new director of Boston's Environment Department.

**Richard D. Tilles**, from Wilbur Smith Associates to transportation manager of The Presidio Trust in San Francisco.

**Howard/Stein-Hudson** was awarded an Excellence in Engineering award from the ACEC/MA for traffic engineering for the CA/T project.

**Former State Representative Gus Serra** is working for Massport.

**Robin Manion**, from executive director of MBTA Advisory Board to CTPS.

**Paul Regan**, former legislative aide and JFK School of Government graduate to executive director, MBTA Advisory Board.

**Michael Taylor**, Boston Redevelopment Authority, is director of Boston 2000.

**Charles Grigsby**, from director of the Department of Neighborhood Development for the City of Boston, to Massachusetts Capital Resource Corp.

**Charlotte Golar Ritchie**, state representative from Dorchester, has been appointed director of Boston's Department of Neighborhood Development.

**1** A venerable downtown Boston hotel is undergoing major renovation. A three-story addition to the **Omni Parker House** on Tremont Street, built in 1927, will be built on the site of the hotel's existing two-story annex. The annex will be demolished. The addition will have the same look as the existing Parker House and will have the capability of carrying the weight of a building the height of the main hotel.

**2** "Sauce for the goose..." After more than a decade of demanding that private landowners on the Boston Harbor waterfront provide a harborwalk on the water's edge, the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) is finally getting around to installing harborwalks on its own property. The BRA has recently completed harborwalks on Sargent's Wharf and the north side of Long Wharf, linking Waterfront Park and Long Wharf.

**3** The Back Bay Architectural Commission has approved a **major exterior restoration project for the Ritz-Carlton Hotel** on Arlington Street. The two-year project will involve removing most of the existing cast stone façade and replacing the stones one by one. Impressive temporary scaffolding in the style of the Ritz-Carlton's blue awnings has been installed two stories above the sidewalk. The Ritz-Carlton, built in 1927, was one of a series of magnificent hotels built in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. A blend of architectural styles, the Ritz-Carlton's Art Deco elements helped make it one of Boston's fashionable places. Restoration will be complete in 2000.

**4** **Piano Row hotel delay**—Construction of the 270-room hotel planned for Boylston Street's Piano Row was delayed due to a dispute over access to the hotel's garage. The developer, Heath Properties, had proposed an underground garage in the rear, with access from Carver Street/Edgar Allen Poe Way.

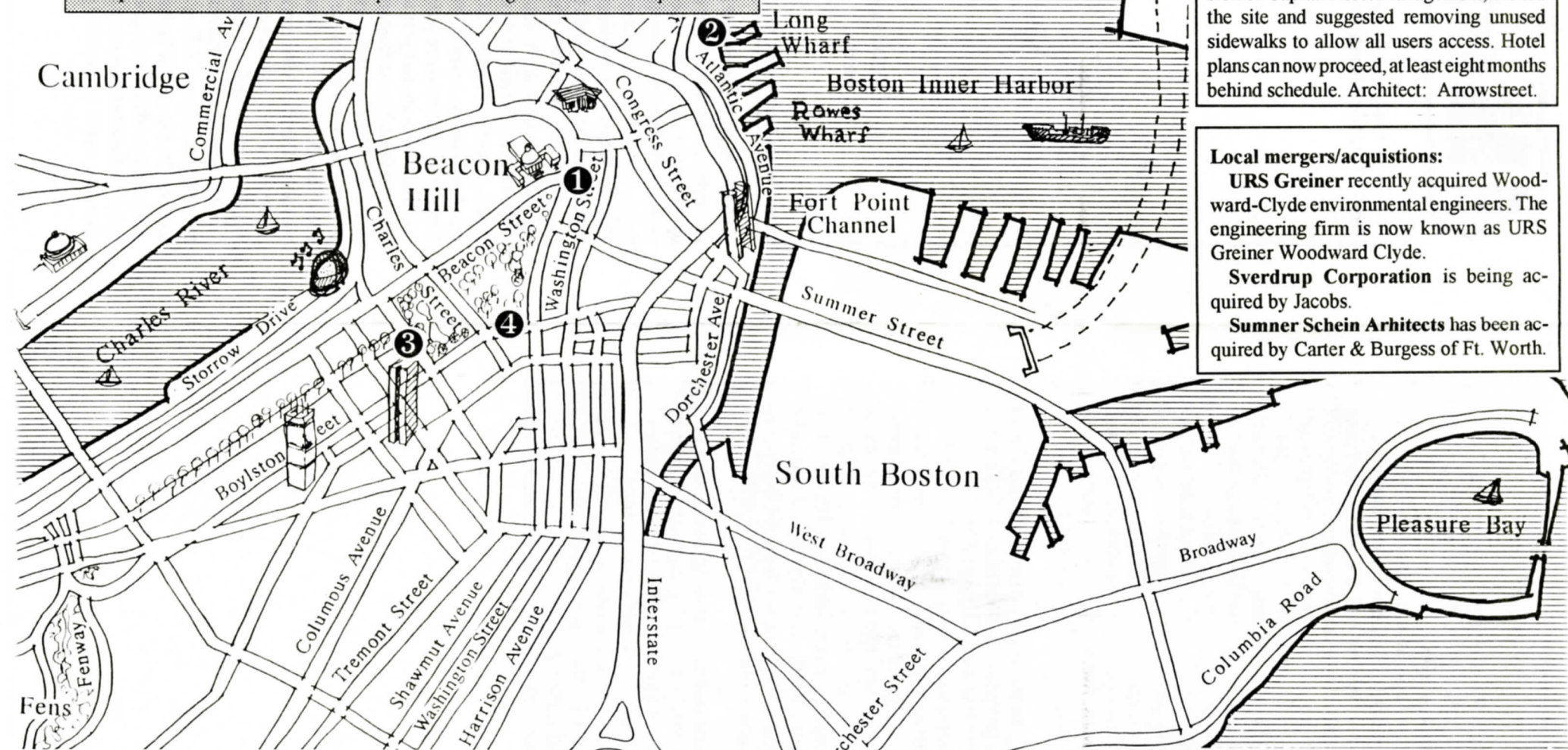
However, the State Transportation Building (STB) opposed it, saying Carver Street was too narrow for two-way traffic. Seems when the STB was built in 1983, the state gained control over part of Carver Street. Heath Properties was pursuing legislative action to return Carver Street to public use when Lark Jurev Palermo, head of the Division of Capital Asset Management, visited the site and suggested removing unused sidewalks to allow all users access. Hotel plans can now proceed, at least eight months behind schedule. Architect: Arrowstreet.

### Local mergers/acquisitions:

**URS Greiner** recently acquired Woodward-Clyde environmental engineers. The engineering firm is now known as URS Greiner Woodward Clyde.

**Sverdrup Corporation** is being acquired by Jacobs.

**Sumner Schein Architects** has been acquired by Carter & Burgess of Ft. Worth.



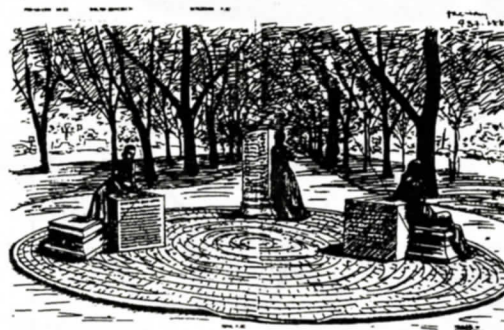
**A Back Bay/Convention Center Access Working Group** has been set up by the Artery Business Committee (ABC). The group's goal is to organize the business community and work with residential areas to improve planning efforts on Back Bay access to the South Boston Seaport District and Logan Airport. ABC and the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce are monitoring the Boston Redevelopment Authority/MassPike Strategic Planning Process for the Turnpike Air Rights. The planning process is seen as key to resolving larger Back Bay access issues, and the working group is closely monitoring the Air Rights transportation study that will evaluate ramp connection(s) for facilitating access between Back Bay, downtown and the Seaport District.

Although efforts by others are underway to restore access to downtown from the Seaport District and Logan Airport, the working group's focus is broader as it examines long-term access for a larger area.

Members of the working group include: Ron Druker, the Druker Co., chair, Robert Beal, the Beal Cos.; David Barrett, Boston Properties-Prudential; John Drew, World Trade Center; Frank McCourt, McCourt Cos.; Marianne Abrams, Back Bay Assn.; Lawrence Gaboury, John Hancock; Pat Moscaritolo, Mass. Convention and Tourist; Rick Dimino, ABC and Chamber; and Stan Durlacher, consultant.

**Two new sculptures are being planned for the Back Bay.** The Women's Memorial is slated to be located in the last outbound block on the Commonwealth Mall. Designed by Meredith Berggman, the project will commemorate the contributions of Bostonian women in history and will depict Abigail Adams, Phyllis Wheatley and Lucy Stone.

The second sculpture is planned for Copley Square to honor its namesake, artist John Singleton Copley. Both will be reviewed before the new Boston Art Commission and are scheduled to be in place within two years.



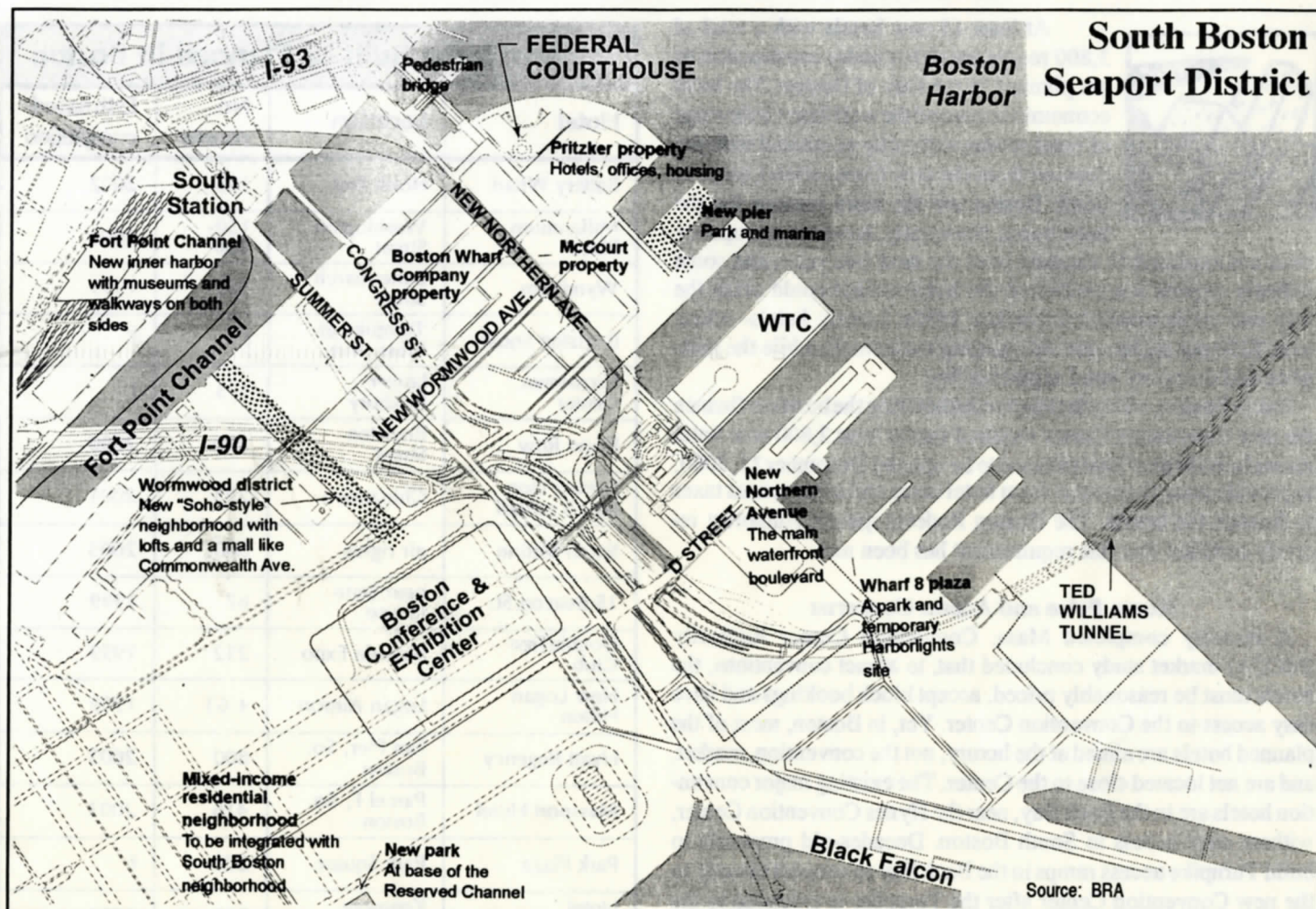
### Farewell, old Registry of Motor Vehicles...

The old Registry of Motor Vehicles at 100 Nashua St. has finally run out of lives. Abandoned several years ago when the Registry at Ruggles Center opened, 100 Nashua St. was back in business when Ruggles Center closed after employees suffered from respiratory sickness. Now, with the Registry at the rehabilitated Liberty Tree Building on Washington Street downtown, the Nashua Street building will be demolished for Central Artery construction.

The building is being cleared of hazardous materials including asbestos and lead paint. "Piece by piece" demolition—similar to that done to the Boston Garden—will start in April 1999 and is scheduled to be complete by the end of 1999 at a cost of \$2.3 million. The owner, the Division of Capital Asset Management, decided not to implode the building because of its proximity to Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, Charles River Park residences, Nashua Street jail and the new highway. Implosion causes large dust clouds that could create problems for abutters. The demolition work will be subject to Mass. Highway Department noise limitation specifications for construction work.



Winter 1999



**Revised South Boston Seaport Plan**—With the help of Cooper Robertson, a New York-based urban design firm, the Boston Redevelopment Authority has come up with its second master plan for the approximately 1,000 acres of the Seaport District in South Boston. The plan has been much better received than the first plan, proposed in November 1997, which was criticized for its density and grandiose scale.

The primary objectives of the new plan are:

- promote access to Boston Harbor as a citywide natural resource
- preserve and enhance the industrial port
- plan the Seaport as a vital, mixed-use neighborhood
- enhance the South Boston community
- develop the Seaport within the economic context of the city

It plan calls for a grid of new streets on a "Boston" scale with small blocks and a system of parks and waterfront pedestrian walkways. It could accommodate up to 20 million s. f. of new development in what is now largely parking lots. Hotels and office buildings would be subject to height limits. New Northern Avenue and Summer Street would become the main east-west boulevards, and D Street, the main north-south road at the planned convention center. It also proposes a new residential district—the

"Wormwood" district—near the Gillette factory headquarters. Some of the difficult issues to be resolved are:

- potential conflicts between the working port and truck routes and the proposed new developments, the Massport developments near the Fish Pier on Parcel F already in progress, and Harborlights on Wharf 8.
- the plan includes a major housing component—originally proposed to be up to 8,000 units, now reduced to 4,000 units—to bring life to the area after business hours and to create an ambience around the convention center similar to that of the Back Bay. Local elected officials are concerned that housing might result in gentrification of South Boston.
- Inadequate public transportation for this scale of development despite the MBTA's South Boston Piers Transitway that is scheduled to open in 2003, connecting the Seaport District to South Station.
- Officials predict the full build-out of the Seaport District could take up to 40 years to achieve, four real estate cycles.

Printed copies of the Seaport plan are expected to be available from the Boston Redevelopment Authority by the end of February.

Source: BRA



# Hotel Update

## Boston Bucks National Trends



At least 15 new hotels with a total of 3,800 rooms are either under construction or are planned in the City of Boston. The local economic boom and the well-known shortage of hotel rooms in the city combined with the demand from the new Convention Center in South Boston are the main reasons for the hotel boom. Nationally, however, occupancy

rates are expected to stagnate over the next two years and some industry experts are predicting the hotel market could crash the way real estate crashed in the late 1980s. Luxury hotels—those over \$250 per night—are still gaining momentum while the mid-price and economy hotel segments flag.

But in Boston, where legislation authorizing the bonds to finance the new Convention Center required that at least 2,800 new hotel rooms be built or at least planned to be open by December 31, 2000, to provide enough revenue from hotel taxes and other tourist taxes to finance the bonds. The Boston Redevelopment Authority recently certified that this requirement has been met.

### Room Price and Access Concerns

A recently completed Mass. Convention Center Authority (MCCA) market study concluded that, to attract conventions, the hotels must be reasonably priced, accept block bookings and have easy access to the Convention Center. Yet, in Boston, most of the planned hotels are aimed at the luxury, not the convention, market, and are not located close to the Center. The existing major convention hotels are in the Back Bay, near the Hynes Convention Center, without easy access to South Boston. Decades-old proposals to build Turnpike access ramps in the Back Bay to connect directly to the new Convention Center after the Turnpike is extended to the Ted Williams Tunnel. The cost of the ramps could be as high as \$100 million and is not funded to date.

According to the current plans, fewer than 2,000 convention hotel rooms will be built within walking distance of the Convention Center. This pales in comparison to the Hynes and other venues:

### Hotel Rooms Within Walking Distance of Convention Centers

Atlantic City	9,800 rooms
Baltimore	4,250
Hynes (Boston)	5,320
Philadelphia	5,150
San Francisco	13,130
South Boston (proposed)	2,000
Washington, D.C.	10,480

The Strategic Advisory Group, consultants to the MCCA, have recommended that the MCCA itself build a 1,200-room, \$240 million, headquarters convention hotel attached or close to the new Convention Center. This type of hotel typically loses money, because of lower room rates and erratic occupancy percentages, depending on convention sizes and schedules.

### Hotels Being Built or Planned in Boston

Hotel	Location	No. rooms	Estimated completion
Battery Wharf	North End	198	2002
Millennium Place	Washington Street	150-200	2001
Wyndham	Battermarch Street	362	1999
Boylston Square	Turnpike at Mass. Ave.	?	?
Crosstown Center	Lower Roxbury	173	?
Piano Row	Boylston Street	270	2000
Former Don Bosco school	Chinatown	273	2001
South Station	air rights	500	2003
15 Beacon St.	near State House	67	1999
DoubleTree Club	Bayside Expo	212	1999
New Logan Hilton	Logan Airport	+ 63	1999
Hyatt Regency	Fan Pier, So. Boston	800	2003
Massport Hotel	Parcel F, So. Boston	416	2003
Park Plaza	Park Square	200	?
Hotel Commonwealth	Kenmore Square	149	2001
<b>TOTAL:</b>		<b>3,808</b>	

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## Welcome to The Boston Informer!

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### Permanent Home for Harborlights?

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## You were asking...

- Q. Can you explain the different powers and duties of the MBTA, Massport, and MassPike, three transportation agencies?**
- A.** Massport, owner/operator of Logan and Hanscom airports, Tobin Bridge and the Port of Boston, and MassPike, owner/operator of the Mass. Turnpike and three under-harbor auto tunnels and manager of the CA/T project, are organized as independent authorities theoretically to isolate from direct political pressures. They have governor-appointed boards of directors and are responsible for their own finances from revenues and selling bonds. As authorities they are responsible to their bond holders. The MBTA provides public transit services in greater Boston. It is a state agency in that it reports directly to the secretary of transportation and construction (also the chairman of the Board of Directors) and is financially dependent on the state legislature.
- Q. What is going to be done with Congress Street now that the proposed pedestrian bridge from City Hall Plaza has been dropped?**
- A.** The City of Boston and its consultants, Fay, Spofford & Thorndike, prepared a redesign of Congress Street and the State/Congress and North/Congress intersections. The redesign received general approval except for the City's insistence on keeping the fenced median, opposed by many including WalkBoston. New consultants, VHB, are doing final design and will present the 25% design at a public hearing in early spring. Call Vineet Gupta at BTB, 635-2756.
- Q. How many lane miles of underground, elevated and at-grade roadway are being built as part of the CA/T project and how many existed before?**
- A.** While The Boston Informer's research team prepares the response for the next issue, readers are invited to send in their best guess and have a chance at a valuable prize!